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INFO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 6528

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 STATE 087911

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/21/2017
TAGS: [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [AE](#) [KPAO](#)
SUBJECT: NEW MOHAMMAD BIN RASHID FOUNDATION: SEIZING THE
\$10 BILLION OPPORTUNITY TO FOSTER POSITIVE CHANGE

REF: ABU DHABI 949

Classified By: NEA DAS Gordon Gray for reason 1.4 (d).

11. (U) This is an action request; please see paragraph four.

12. (C) Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (MbR), UAE Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, announced at the World Economic Forum on May 19 the establishment of the \$10 billion Mohammed Bin Rashid Foundation (MbRF), whose mission is to improve education, create jobs, and enhance culture in the Arab and Muslim world. Reftel reported that the UAEG would welcome cooperation with the USG in identifying ideas, institutions, and programs for the MbRF. Department concurs with Mission's assessment that the MbRF's objectives are largely consistent with many USG goals for the region, and that the UAEG's invitation for input provides an excellent opportunity for us to help speed and shape MbRF programs that support U.S. regional reform goals, particularly with regard to promoting education, regional job skills, and employment opportunities. USG reform-promotion efforts work best when they encourage and reinforce indigenous activities that have organic local support.

13. (S/NF) The MbRF's goals -- advancing liberal thinking, promoting modernization, and countering violent extremism -- dovetail with several key USG counterterrorism objectives as well. For example, by supporting moderate Islamic educational institutions and activities, the MbRF could serve as a financial counterweight to others in the region who fund extremist mosques and Islamic centers around the world. MbRF programs aimed at delegitimizing extremist ideology that provides the theological justification for violent religious radicalism would be a positive and significant contribution in the ideas front of the War on Terror. Also, the greater the prestige and soft power of the UAE and other progressive-minded Arab governments, the weaker the influence of its regional ideological competitors.

14. (C) Action Request: Department requests that the Mission informally approach the MbRF to demonstrate support for the work of the Foundation and to offer suggestions for key areas where the MbRF might concentrate their initial efforts. Pursuant to this objective, the Mission should consider offering a voluntary visitor grant for the executive director or other representatives of the MbRF to meet counterpart directors at U.S. charitable foundations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other philanthropies that have similar goals. Mission should emphasize as well U.S. and USG experience in suggested areas highlighted below, and offer that more in-depth discussions

in any of these areas could be included in a voluntary visitor program or separately arranged for more in-depth follow-up discussion. Reciprocally, the Foundation could invite/fund an education/philanthropy trade mission from the U.S. consisting of implementers, U.S. universities, NGOs, foundation executives, etc. to share experiences, ideas and best practices with the Foundation. The USG would help facilitate assembly of the group and its meetings, while the Foundation would pay trip-related costs.

15. (C) When meeting with MbRF officials, Post may express USG interest in the goals of the Foundation and desire to work closely with its leadership; convey USG support for the Foundation's interest in promoting the development of critical thinking and technology skills among young people; and encourage the MbRF to collaborate with the Foundation for the Future (POC: Francisco Rosa at (202) 203-0591 or Anwar Ibrahim at nat@renya.net) and the newly launched Arab Foundation for Democracy, and offer assistance in facilitating contact with USG officials, foundations, NGO,s, and other entities involved in activities that support MbRF goals. When discussing foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, offer to facilitate contact via Under Secretary Hughes, Office of Private Sector Outreach for Public Diplomacy (POC: B.J. Goergen at 202-647-9199). Embassy should remain engaged with the foundation and continue to assist with facilitation of projects that mesh with USG policy objectives.

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16. (U) Pursuant to those overall objectives, Mission interlocutors using their discretion may raise the following ideas with the Foundation, emphasizing priority on exchanges and new technology. These suggestions may be left as a non-paper.

17. (U) Begin suggestions/non-paper:

Educational Initiatives

Educational and exchange programs are one of the best, proven ways to provide economic opportunity and open windows to critical thinking. Recommend that exchange programs target youth and those people who can influence a broader segment of society (e.g.: clerics, women, journalists, business, scientists).

EXCHANGES

- encourage the Foundation to fund significant numbers of undergraduate and graduate scholarships for studies in the U.S., possibly through experienced NGOs such as the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) and the Institute for International Education (IIE). (POC Rossalind Swenson, tel: (202) 453-8130, email: SwensonRL@state.gov)
- encourage the Foundation to consider funding a structured program for high school students to spend the year after twelfth grade abroad on a "13th year" exchange programs. Students from the U.S. and other countries should likewise be encouraged/funded to study in the U.A.E. and elsewhere in the region.

TECHNOLOGY

- emphasize importance of new technology to youth audiences, and encourage exploration of ways to use new technologies and electronic media, such as the Internet and cell phones, to

reach young people and amplify programs.

- encourage the Foundation to provide computers, internet Access, and I.T. training to schools and colleges in regions or countries lacking access to the latest technology.

- encourage the Foundation to establish a telemedicine program for in-service training for regional doctors, nurses, and other health care workers taking advantage of the latest telecommunications technology linking remote areas with partner institutions in the region and abroad.

- encourage expansion of e-learning and e-education programs with institutional support to encourage greater use of technology in education so that students are given the right skills to compete in the modern economy.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- encourage the Foundation to support the development of both in-school and outside-of-school civic and citizenship education programs in conjunction with U.S. NGO partners like the California-based Center for Civic Education (executive director Charles Quigley Chuck21875@aol.com), the Washington DC-based Street Law, Inc. (executive director Ed O'Brien eobrien@streetlaw.org), and the American Federation of Teachers (international affairs director David Dorn DDorn@aft.org) to foster the development of civil society and strengthen democratic practices among youth.

- encourage the Foundation to support curriculum reform/improvement and purchases of curriculum for schools.

- encourage the Foundation to fund a program similar to ECA's ACCESS Micro-scholarships for English learning, which provides at-risk high school-age youth the opportunity to study English with native speakers in an interactive setting, encouraging participation and critical thinking.

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- encourage the Foundation to fund Teach For initiatives, adapted from the successful American model Teach for America, which empowers and employs recent university graduates as alternative role models to teach critical subjects to underprivileged youth. (POC: Jared Cohen tel: (202) 647-0531 email: CohenJA2@state.gov)

SCHOOLS

- encourage the Foundation to fund the construction of charter/magnet schools in regions or countries as needed, particularly to bring non-rote, non religious-based education to students in disadvantaged areas.

- encourage the Foundation to fund the construction of an overseas campus of an established American university in the UAE.

BOOKS

- encourage the Foundation to fund a significant book translation program, to include important current and classic works of fiction and non-fiction with an emphasis on works underscoring tolerance, acceptance of diversity, respect for human rights (including women,s rights), and

cross-cultural/intersectorian understanding.

-- encourage the Foundation to fund translation of major economics/business textbooks in Arabic and other major languages spoken in the Islamic world. Target audience would be potential future entrepreneurs in developing countries, including women.

-- encourage the Foundation to provide Scholastic's "My Arabic Library" program for public elementary schools in the countries with significant Arabic-speaking populations. This could also be extended to include production of these books in other languages that are spoken in Muslim communities, such as Urdu, Bengali, and Pashtu. (POC: Dr. Carol Sakoian, tel: (212) 343-4705, email: CSakoian@scholastic.com)

MEDIA & JOURNALISM

-- encourage the Foundation to establish a regional journalism training program at the Dubai Media City to improve journalistic skills, standards and practices among the many media practitioners based there.

- encourage the Foundation to support innovative television, print, and other electronic media to promote positive messages, similar to the Oprah show (popular in the UAE). Of particular interest would be media appealing to youth audiences. Examples might include internet blogging projects where youth focus on topics such as education, entrepreneurship, investing, etc.

BUSINESS SKILLS

- encourage the Foundation to contribute generously to the Junior Achievement Program, also known as "INJAZ Arabia", which has recently been introduced in the Gulf, and which teaches high school and university students real-world business skills. (POC: Soraya Salti at soraya@injaz-arabia.org)

- encourage the Foundation to partner with AIESEC, an international student organization designed to enable students from countries around the world to go abroad and complete business internships from 3 months to one year to, strengthen practical and entrepreneurial skills. MEPI has provided funding to assist this program to expand to the region; progress made to date may allow for increased opportunities with increased funding. (POC: Jennifer Harwood tel: (212) 757-3774 email: jenniferh@aiesecus.org)

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- encourage the Foundation to establish a Grameen Bank-type model of micro-credits to support individuals for

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commercial and employment generating ventures throughout the region and beyond, in an effort to promote self-reliance and entrepreneurship to disadvantaged and/or underserved constituencies in all countries in the region.

- encourage the Foundation to facilitate enhanced professional development by sending individuals to the U.S. for professional or executive training, along the lines of the Dubai School of Government's program for regional civil servants.

- encourage the foundation to support a science and technology research center open to the region. This could be

an element in the &business incubator8 idea that the foundation has put forward and upon which we should build. Such incubators have been quite successful in Central-East Europe and have multiple benefits including job creation, civic participation, local government participation, enhancement of critical thinking, and work skill development.

VOLUNTARISM & SERVICE

-- encourage the Foundation to fund the establishment of a paid service corps to promote public service throughout the Muslim world; this could include recent graduates teaching at schools or business people teaching entrepreneurship skills or journalists training lower-skilled journalists.

End suggestions/Non-paper.
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